

ELF Ralph Dahrendorf Roundtable “LGBT rights in Times of Populism - Liberal ideas for a more tolerant Europe”

On the fringes of Baltic Pride Human Rights Conference, Vilnius, June 6

Following a proud SILC tradition of arranging LGBTI-policy events, one of the formats of 2019 ended up being roundtable discussion held on the fringes of the Baltic Pride Human Rights Conference in Vilnius, during the Baltic Pride week on Thursday, June 6th.

Baltic Pride is the biggest Pride-week arranged in the Baltic region and a rotating event, shared between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. LGBTI-rights are still largely threatened in Eastern Europe and traditional family values are still the norm, making events such as Baltic Pride even more important to support.

The roundtable had two parts, beginning with priest Cecilia Redner, giving her reflections of how the discourse changed within the Church of Sweden, now openly supporting and welcoming LGBTI-people. In this optimistic session, activists from Poland, Ukraine, Estonia and Latvia gave their comments focusing on the positive signs of advancement that can be seen in their respective countries. The second half of the panel focused on evaluating the EP elections and how the battle for LGBTI-rights is fought on a European level. The conclusions of the panelists were that advances in LGBT acceptance and tolerance can also be interpreted from the election results. The growing influence of liberals in the parliament being one.

The event was held in the beautiful Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Vilnius with an active and energetic audience. The event was streamed online and thereby accessible to a broader audience, although some viewers had problems with the connection. Many in the room expressed appreciation that liberals are leading the lines for more open European societies.

Per Olsson, Swedish International Liberal Centre